A reinvigorated Network of Executive Women is launching a new movement for workplace change.
It’s time to recognize an important truth: Women are the key to your success. The retail, consumer goods and services industry will rise — or fall — with its women customers and employees.

Women drive our business. Women make 63 percent of trips to grocery stores and make or influence 93 percent of food purchases. They are the sole or primary breadwinners in 40 percent of U.S. households with children and wield growing influence over consumer spending in the United States (and around the world).

But 59 percent of women polled by Nielsen said food marketers do not understand them. That’s a problem — and an opportunity.

Consider the competitive advantage that’s possible when companies’ decision-makers reflect their customer base. And, research shows, organizations with more women leaders perform better. A 2011...
study by Catalyst reported that companies with three or more female board members outperformed those with no women directors. These companies saw an 84 percent higher return on sales, a 60 percent higher return on investment capital and a 46 percent return on equity in at least four of the five years analyzed.

Wired for leadership
Other research shows talented women bring unique perspectives and leadership qualities to once-male-dominated teams. In a 2007 study of 100 work teams across 21 organizations in 17 countries, the Centre for Women in Business at the London Business School found teams with at least 50 percent women were more motivated and innovative than those where women were in the minority, while teams with a clear majority of women — 60 percent — expressed greater self-confidence.

Beyond the benefits of gender diverse teams, women are especially well suited to lead in today’s changing marketplace and evolving workplace. The Pew Research Center asked 2,250 people to name the most important leadership traits. The survey results, reported in “Men or Women: Who’s the Better Leader?”, found that women were rated as better than or equal to men in seven of eight top leadership characteristics, including honesty, outgoingness, compassion and creativity. (They tied men on being ambitious and hardworking.)

Dr. Daniel Amen, author of *Unleash the Power of the Female Brain* (Harmony 2013) and conductor of the biggest brain-scan study ever (46,000 scans), found that “female brains were dramatically more active. Women are really wired for leadership…they really make great CEOs.”

But despite the strong case for women’s leadership, women are vastly under-represented in key decision-making and leadership roles. Although there’s a general impression that women are moving up the ranks as never before, the numbers don’t bear that out. The percentage of women in officer roles in the retail industry has remained virtually unchanged in the past five years, moving from 18.5 percent in 2008 to 18.6 percent in 2013, according to Catalyst.

**What Millennials Want**

53% aspire to become the leader or most senior executive within their current organization.

59% of men would like to secure the “top job” in their organization.

47% of women would like to advance to the top.

28% feel their current organization is making full use of their skills.

34% of women said they’d emphasize employee growth and development as leaders.

30% of men said they’d emphasize employee growth and development.

“Millennials are just as interested in how a business develops its people and how it contributes to society as they are in its products and profits,” said Barry Salzberg, CEO of Deloitte Global. “The business community, particularly in developed markets, need to change the way they engage Millennial talent or risk being left behind.”


**Women’s Leadership Quiz**

Q: How much do you know about the power of women and their leadership traits?

1. Which of these statements is not true?
   A. Women are more likely to have high school diplomas
   B. Women are more likely to have college degrees
   C. Men are more likely to have post-graduate degrees

2. The U.S. public perceives men to be stronger than women in which of these leadership traits?
   A. Intelligence
   B. Compassion
   C. Decisiveness
   D. Creativity

3. Organizations with mostly male leaders________________
   A. Have a greater affinity with female consumers
   B. Are more focused on transactions
   C. Have a stronger financial performance
   D. Have more innovative and motivated teams

4. Since 2008, the share of women corporate officers in the retail industry has:
   A. Increased 5 percent
   B. Decreased 5 percent
   C. Stayed about the same
   D. Increased 10 percent

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*How did you do? The answers are 1, C; 2, C; 3, B; 4, C.*

*Surprised? Women are more likely than men to be high school graduates and to have undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. According to Catalyst, companies with the most women leaders had higher returns on sales and invested capital than by the Center for Women in Business. But the result is not fewer transactions. According to Catalyst, companies with the most women leaders had higher returns on sales and invested capital than. According to research by the Center for Women in Business, companies with more than 40% women leaders are more innovative and productive. According to a 2008 study by PwC Research, they are more likely to be perceived as innovative.*

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*Women in Leadership: It’s Time 3*
Women and Millennials
The typical workplace with a traditional hierarchy and corporate culture, and lack of diversity among its leaders, is not only holding women back — it’s holding business back. When organizations look to diversity, inclusion and women’s advancement as major components of their strategic plans, they significantly enhance their competitive position for today and for the future.

Why? Workplace changes that have long been championed by women appeal to tomorrow’s leaders, Millennials born between 1980 and 2000, too. Women want a more flexible, more collaborative, more authentic, less authoritative corporate culture; a focus on work/life balance; more opportunity for advancement; and the chance to make an impact. Millennials, 80 million strong, want the same.

In a 2011 survey of more than 4,000 graduates across 75 countries by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), more than half of respondents said they preferred employers who offered opportunities for advancement, while 35 percent cited “excellent training/development programs.” Virtually every Millennial surveyed — 95 percent — said work/life balance was important to them when choosing where to work.

Female Millennials, in particular, seek out employers with a strong record on equality and diversity — and employers that do more than “talk the talk,” according to the 2014 PwC report “Developing Tomorrow’s Female Leaders.”

About the Network of Executive Women
Founded in 2001, the Network of Executive Women, Retail and Consumer Goods and Services, is a not-for-profit educational association representing nearly 9,000 members, 100 corporate partners and 20 regional groups in the United States and Canada. Network members come from more than 750 industry organizations, including grocery, chain drug, mass retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers, service providers, associations and universities.

The mission of NEW is to advance women, grow business and transform our industry’s workplace through the power of our community. To support this mission, the organization provides best practices on gender diversity, career development opportunities, research, learning events and networking programs designed to advance women’s leadership in the retail, consumer goods and services industries. NEW is open to women and men, emerging leaders and senior-level executives. NEW hosts more than 100 regional learning and networking events each year and two national conferences, the NEW Leadership Summit and the NEW Executive Leaders Forum. For more information on NEW’s programs and events, visit newonline.org.

To help executives transform their organizations, NEW is rolling out four new programs:

The NEW Executive Institute, an intensive 12-month learning course for emerging executives which creates a safe environment for leadership exploration and deep learning at three off-site immersion sessions, a series of webinars and conference calls, one-to-one sessions with an executive coach, ongoing education and networking over a 12-month period, and access to the NEW Executive Institute Alumni Support Network.

NEW Career Accelerator workshops, designed specifically for leaders in the retail, consumer goods and services industry using cutting-edge research developed in partnership with the Center for Creative Leadership. Using the NEW Career Accelerator Model, team members are rated by superiors, peers and direct reports on critical career competencies and derailers.

Innovation You, a webinar series led by thought leaders in career advancement. In eight one-hour webinars, industry professionals will learn dynamic ways to control their career path, build a personal brand, navigate pitfalls and better manage work-life balance. The webinars may be viewed live or recorded, and are offered free for NEW members. Nonmembers may view webinars at $99 each.

Multigenerational Leadership, a series of six webinars designed to help every leader or aspiring leader — from Millennials to Boomers — manage today’s multigenerational workforce. The course — led by Sarah Sladek, founder of management consulting firm XYZ University — deep dives into the unique buying habits of Millennial consumers and the 2020 work environment. These webinars also may be viewed live or recorded, and are offered free for NEW members. Nonmembers may view webinars at $99 each.
Q: How would you characterize the gender achievement gap in the retail/consumer goods industry?

A: Today, women control 70 percent of household spending and they make or influence 93 percent of all food purchases, while taking 63 percent of all trips to the grocery store. Yet the majority of decision-makers in our industry continue to be men.

Although more women have entered the workforce, women continue to be underrepresented in top leadership roles. According to research done by Catalyst in 2012, women accounted for less than 15 percent of executive officers and less than 17 percent held board seats for Fortune 500 companies. The numbers are striking and unfortunately they highlight the fact that we are not seeing a material shift toward equality in the executive ranks, even though research shows companies with more women in leadership roles outperform less diverse companies.

I believe that the challenges surrounding female retention and advancement in our industry need to be addressed if companies are going to be poised for long-term, sustainable growth. We need to change corporate culture, we need to break organizational barriers and we need to involve males as partners in the journey. We need to have leaders set the example and we need to transform the workplace for the future. Only then will the gender achievement gap start to shrink.

Q: The Network of Executive Women found that workplace initiatives long championed by women (flexibility, career development, the opportunity to make a difference) are also desired by Millennials. How might this intersection change our workplaces?

A: Millennials, now in their 20s and 30s, are 80 million strong and will become the majority of our workforce this year. They are confident, independent, connected and diverse.

Moreover, Millennials share the same workplace priorities as women. Namely, they want balance between work and life. They want a flexible work environment. And they want to make a difference. When you create a workplace that attracts and retains women, you create a workplace that attracts and retains Millennials, too.

Given the impact that Millennials are having, it is clear that we need to address diversity and inclusion challenges head-on, or risk that they migrate to other companies, leaving our industry with a massive talent void. Just look at the tech industries that are successfully recruiting out of the top schools — they empower their workforce to work when, where and how they want. They create a workplace that is fluid, dynamic and unstructured. And they take risks in charting new ways of doing things while challenging the status quo. We are competing for the same talent so evolution is a ‘must do’, not a ‘nice to do.’

Q: Last fall, NEW published a report on the status of multicultural women in the retail and consumer goods industry and the career challenges they face as women and as people of color. Why should this “double bind” be addressed?

A: We’ve been speaking about solutions that affect women as a whole — but women come from all backgrounds — 36 percent of U.S. women are multicultural and they comprise nearly 12 percent of our managerial workforce. These numbers are growing fast.

Still, the wage gap between white women and nonwhite women is as big or bigger than the wage gap between women and men. Multicultural women have different workplace experiences and career challenges related to both gender and race/ethnicity. But companies often do not recognize that there are differences that need to be acknowledged and addressed between non-white and white women. The same is true for young and old, black and white, Hispanic and Asian, native born and immigrant, gay and straight. The tapestry of women in our industry is vast and we need to be mindful of that so we develop programs and solutions that benefit everyone.

Q: How has being a mother impacted your career and the work/life choices you’ve made?

A: One of the reasons I am so passionate about diversity is because I am a mom. I have a son and daughter and my hope is that when they enter the workforce they don’t see a difference in gender.

My daughter sees me as an example of a successful working mom who is thoughtful of the choices she makes for both her family and her career. My son sees a strong, independent woman who isn’t afraid to have a voice and provide for the family. My kids also have a strong father figure who stays home to do the homework, coach the teams and manage the household. One isn’t more important than the other, both roles need to work successfully... and gender isn’t a factor in who assumes which role.

As a working mom I make choices every day about work/life...I know that I will not make every school event, but I also know which ones are critical. Declaring what is important and then being visible and transparent about it is critical as a leader.

I also realize, however, that others have not been as fortunate as I have been. Research shows that working mothers are often penalized on a host of measures, regardless of hours worked or commitment to their careers. They are offered lower starting salaries, are less likely to be offered training opportunities and often are not supported for leadership roles. Eliminating bias against mothers and instituting family-friendly benefits and work arrangements is a win-win. At PepsiCo, our CEO Indra Nooyi talks about ‘bringing your whole self to work.’ Parents — female and male — should be able to embrace that role both inside and outside of the office. There are lots of things you can outsource, but you can’t outsource being a parent.
Behind the Gender Gap: It's Time
Everyone says they support women leaders. So why aren’t there more of them?

Women leaders have the insights and skills that retail and consumer goods companies need and their priorities and career goals align with those of tomorrow’s leaders — male and female. Why, then, have women fallen behind their male counterparts in pay and career advancement? The reasons are many and complex, and they start with conscious and unconscious bias embedded in today’s workplace.

A 2011 survey by McKinsey & Company revealed that “deeply entrenched beliefs within corporate culture” are causing the biggest resistance to advancing women to leadership roles. Women candidates are frequently judged differently from their male counterparts when opportunities for promotion arise, the study found. A woman may be seen as too passive or too aggressive, or even more vaguely, “not right for that position” based on long-held gender stereotypes. Male executives have even admitted to overlooking a woman simply because they “didn’t know how to talk to or mentor her.”

The old boys’ club continues to halt women in their tracks. Participants in Network of Executive Women (NEW) focus groups for the NEW 2020 research initiative said male leaders in the retail and consumer goods industry often devalue their contributions in meetings, disregard their requests for mentoring opportunities and are quick to take credit for women’s ideas in high-visibility arenas. Moreover, women said they are habitually excluded from informal networking opportunities, where influential decision-making takes place.

“I’m the only [female] V.P. in my company,” recounted one female industry leader. “When the men went on a retreat, they accidentally emailed photos while they were away, and I thought, ‘Oh, so this is what you do without me.’ It can be lonely to be the only woman.”

One problem: Too few women are advancing to...
It’s time for a new workplace. One that’s less rigid and more flexible. Less authoritative and more collaborative. Less conformist and more diverse. More authentic and less impersonal. NEW is creating a new model for workplace transformation. To advance women and create a workplace with no limits for everyone.

Women in Leadership: It’s Time
Q: Why is developing and advancing women a good business?
A: The need to support and advance women in the workforce goes beyond good business strategy. If we don’t make this a priority, I believe the stability of the global economy and the future of our family households are at great risk. Today women represent nearly half of our industry’s workforce and control roughly $20 trillion of consumer spending. In addition, a 2014 report from the White House Council of Economic Advisors shows that women are completing college and graduate school at higher rates than men. When combined with longer life expectancy rates than men, we have a confluence of events that represent a “perfect storm” for our industry.

Yet women continue to be under-represented in management and executive levels. Fewer than 5% of CEOs are female and women only represent 19% of those serving on corporate boards of the S&P 500. The disparity is even greater for women of color. This is particularly concerning, as women of color will represent the majority of the U.S. female population by 2050. Not addressing these disparities will ultimately hurt the industry’s ability to attract and retain the best talent.

Without representation and active engagement at senior levels in the consumer industry, we lack understanding of women’s needs along their life cycle and we miss opportunities to innovate and design products and services that appropriately and respectfully address this growing market.

Q: How would you characterize your company’s efforts to advance more women to senior roles?
A: As a company doing business in more than 200 countries and territories, diversity and engagement (D&E) is integral to everything we do. Performance with Purpose is our commitment to deliver sustained value, which can’t be done without engaging the collective intelligence of our talent. Our commitment to D&E has made our company a strong and attractive place to work by building a diverse, inclusive and engaged culture with a workforce reflective of the consumer base in our local markets.

PepsiCo’s goals and initiatives reflect a desire not only to include, but also to support and engage women at all levels of our operations. This is accomplished through a three-pronged approach that includes promoting gender diversity in the workplace, advancing female leadership through corporate sponsorships and empowering and educating women and girls through the work of the PepsiCo Foundation.

As the percentage of women in the workforce increases, PepsiCo prepares to meet the challenges of hiring new talent, assisting women with re-entry into the workforce and building skills capacity of female associates through local customized programs. Regional Diversity & Engagement Councils assist in identifying local challenges and work with those teams to build solutions.

Female associates at PepsiCo can take advantage of a number of mentoring programs to help advance their careers. From the front-line to executive positions, we provide functional and leadership development opportunities. We also offer functional development through our online courses on PEP University that offer greater flexibility for women to customize their training programs.

Leadership Investment For Tomorrow (LIFT) is an 18-month leadership/talent-development program that provides women of color with access to direct executive mentoring. Participants focus on development, network acceleration, career advancement, executive awareness, and career strategy.

The Women’s Inclusion Network (WIN), one of PepsiCo’s most powerful and active Employee Resource Groups, elevates women internally and in the community by encouraging members to share their personal and professional experiences and network to support business initiatives.

The learnings from this spectrum of programs and initiatives allows the company to “lift and shift” best practices to better address women’s issues worldwide. And we are seeing results.

In the United States, 31 percent of PepsiCo’s executives are women.

While the company is proud of this progress, PepsiCo remains focused on supporting the advancement of women to achieve even greater gains.

Q: In what ways must today’s corporate policies and culture change for companies to leverage the best talent, regardless of gender?
A: We all want gender equality in opportunities and pay, and this can be achieved if we deploy a holistic approach to analyzing and developing solutions. I believe it begins with developing a mindset to reduce unconscious bias so we can truly harness the collective intelligence and passions of everyone. Working together we can identify new challenges and solutions in our ever-complex multicultural markets. For example, can we leverage technology across the enterprise to provide flexible work arrangements to women of all levels?

At PepsiCo, the men on our leadership teams are aligned on policies and processes that help create a workforce that mirrors the markets in which we operate. They demonstrate this through leadership in community and leveraging the many programs we offer.

Although new in my role as Chief Diversity Officer, I have been affiliated with PepsiCo for more than 14 years as a former Ethnic Advisory Board Member. I am excited to work with our leaders to help usher in this new era of engagement and emphasis on women as part of our on-going legacy of diversity.

Talking with...

Deborah Rosado Shaw,
Senior Vice President, Chief Global Diversity and Engagement, PepsiCo
It’s Time to Leverage Multicultural Women

Commit to, and embrace, cultural diversity.

Not so long ago, diversity was seen as black and white, male and female. Little attention was paid to the extraordinary experiences, contributions and career challenges of multicultural women. This has created an achievement gap that persists. Not only are multicultural women under-represented in the retail and consumer goods industry’s leadership, their unique challenges are not being addressed — something we have to do if we’re to achieve a workplace with no limits.

Multicultural women face two career challenges, as women and as persons of color. Company policies and corporate cultures that ignore those challenges and the unique contributions of multicultural women are doing the women and the company a disservice. “We are seeing a big difference in performance between companies that are more diverse and those that are more insular,” says Valerie Lewis, assistant vice president, assistant secretary and senior corporate counsel for Safeway Inc.

Indeed, while industry leaders have been talking about the importance of the multicultural consumer for the last decade, no real progress has been made advancing multicultural women to senior roles. As a result, most retail and consumer products companies are not fully benefitting from the rich diversity of thought these employees offer.

Last year, NEW released the “Tapestry” report, based on research; interviews with industry leaders; and an online survey exploring multicultural women’s advancement opportunities, the workplace experiences of women and men.
It’s time for women’s leadership.
It’s time for a movement.

It’s time for a new workplace.

NEW is creating a new model for workplace transformation to advance women and create a more flexible and inclusive workplace for everyone.

Unified Grocers has proudly served as a regional sponsor of NEW since 2008.
Talking with...

Sarah Chartrand
SVP Talent and Human Resources, Ahold USA

Ahold USA is a $26 billion business and the leading food retailer in the Northeast United States, with approximately 770 stores and four operating divisions: Giant/Martins; Giant Food of Maryland; Stop & Shop New York Metro; and Stop & Shop New England. Its Peapod business is the country’s leading online grocery retailer, which operates across the market areas of the company’s retail divisions and is a purely online business in Chicago and surrounding areas.

Diversity & Inclusion is important to Ahold USA, which is why the company has invested in the launch of business resource groups in order to further facilitate the connection and collaboration between people with a common affinity. Sarah Chartrand, the SVP Talent and Human Resources, spoke to Progressive Grocer about the importance of D&I to Ahold USA, along with its women’s resource groups and Ahold USA’s strong partnership with the Network of Executive Women (NEW).

Progressive Grocer: What is the history and legacy of Ahold USA’s approach to and success with diversity in its mentorship and development approaches and programs?

Sarah Chartrand: We have a long and rich commitment to diversity within Ahold USA and our Divisions. In the 15 years I have been with the company, all of the senior leaders I have worked with have taken a genuine interest in embedding diversity and inclusion within our business, in everything from our management development and recruiting practices to engagement strategies, to our community partnerships. At the same time, there is a constant desire to get even better in this space, which is very exciting to me.

PG: What are some examples of Ahold’s innovative ways of mentoring and developing associates to reflect the organization’s diversity of team members? How is this executed — in both different and customized ways — across your brands and stores?

SC: About two years ago, the very active and energetic Women Adding Value (WAV) Business Resource Group (BRG) in our Giant Landover Division implemented a “Mentoring Circles” concept, where small groups of associates gather on a monthly basis to discuss career progression, give advice, and learn from one another. We have seen great success with this program and it was later launched in our Ahold USA Support Offices and other divisions. Additionally, we are just beginning to replicate this type of model within our ALANA/Mosaic multicultural BRG.

PG: In particular, how has your relationship with the Network of Executive Women impacted or influenced programs that directly involve and benefit Ahold’s employees, and ensure strong and diverse future leadership? Can you share some examples of your collaboration/participation with NEW?

SC: Our partnership with NEW is very fulfilling, both organizationally and personally. We connect the regional groups directly with our Divisional WAV BRGs, providing robust leadership development and networking opportunities for our associates. We send numerous leaders to the national conferences each year, connected to our management development program. We create opportunities for our female leaders to speak at national and regional conferences, giving them much deserved recognition and visibility within the industry. And for me personally, I have spent the past four years on the NEW Board of Directors, which has been an amazing developmental experience. As a board member, I have been able to help shape the future educational strategy and offerings of NEW, which will contribute to the growth and advancement of women throughout our industry!
of all backgrounds, corporate practices and the role of white women and men in closing the career achievement gap. As white women make slow but steady progress into executive levels, the report revealed, multicultural women can find their upward advancement stalling out in hidden places of the organizational chart while the circumstances that hinder their movement go unnoticed.

“There are folks [of color] who were superstars [at their jobs], but who are no longer with their companies because they weren’t considered for advancement,” Lewis said. “Sometimes a person of color will get feedback that sounds a lot like, ‘Gee, you are doing so well, why aren’t you happy? Look at what you have now.’ Senior management may promote one or two minorities who they are comfortable with and think we should be happy with that ‘diversity.’ However, for there to be meaningful change, there has to be a top-down commitment to diversity in all areas of the enterprise.”

At PepsiCo Inc. that commitment exists and the bottom line has benefited from it. Multicultural women have helped grow businesses that may not have been developed by other employees, according to Tom Greco, CEO of Frito-Lay North America. For example, a Latina employee helped PepsiCo see the opportunity in securing the sponsorship of the Mexican national soccer team in advance of the 2014 World Cup. “We embraced the multicultural consumer and we advanced multicultural leaders who have a visceral understanding of our consumer,” Greco said. “As a result, we’re growing faster.”

To create an inclusive environment, companies must recognize the differences in how women perceive the workplace and nurture a culture that will leverage the talents and traits of multicultural women leaders, rather than continue the encouragement of “covering” — which finds multicultural women feeling pressure to hide certain aspects of their lives, and feeling uncomfortable being their authentic selves at work.

An African-American woman responding to the NEW survey noted the majority of high-level executives — white males — are more comfortable working with white women than multicultural women, because “[white women] were the first to break through the ceiling, and they’re what white men executives are used to [as] wives, mothers, sisters.

[Among men of all races and ethnicities], there’s a comfort level of talking sports, etc. Women of color just don’t have that one thing that brings comfort to the executives, so it can sometimes provide a barrier.”

Respondents to the NEW survey ranked “corporate culture is not diverse” as the No. 1 reason there are not more multicultural women in leadership roles in the retail and consumer goods industry, proof that to leverage the diversity of thought and leadership skills that multicultural women bring to corporate America, companies must champion cultural fluency through role modeling, policies and procedures.

“We embraced the multicultural consumer and we advanced multicultural leaders who have a visceral understanding of our consumer. As a result, we’re growing faster.”

— Tom Greco, CEO, Frito-Lay North America

How to Close the Multicultural Achievement Gap

Here are strategies for women of all races and ethnicities for building bridges and connecting to each other:

- Increase your awareness of your group and your own privileges and disadvantages.
- Acknowledge and challenge your own biases and stereotypes.
- Be honest; explore the critiques and concepts you most wish to reject.
- Take responsibility for your own lack of knowledge about other groups of women.
- Read, watch documentaries and begin to educate yourself about others.
- Be willing to honestly and thoughtfully engage in courageous conversations, where you will hear others’ truths about you.
- Recognize that each group of women has something to learn and to share.
- Become comfortable in the roles of teacher and student.
- Ask for help. Give help when asked. Offer help when possible.
- Embrace your own power and influence.
- Be open to new relationships.
- Seek a mentor or sponsor outside the company.

Source: Tapestry: Leveraging the rich diversity of women in retail and consumer goods
Launched a Movement

Inside NEW’s bold new campaign for women’s leadership in retail and consumer goods.

At this year’s FMI Midwinter Executive Conference in Miami Beach, Fla., the Network of Executive Women (NEW) launched its new “It’s Time” movement for women’s leadership and workplace change. A summary of this presentation, given by NEW CEO Joan Toth and NEW Board members Amy Hahn of Ahold USA and Lisa Walsh of PepsiCo Inc., is excerpted below. Video highlights can be found on NEW’s “It’s Time” website at newonline.org/itstime.

Since its founding in 2001, NEW has been highly successful in putting women’s leadership on the industry’s agenda. We have built a powerful organization and grown to more than 9,000 members. We have helped tens of thousands of leaders. But we’ve sent these leaders back to companies that haven’t changed. The share of women in leadership roles in our industry has barely budged in the past five years. So NEW set a new course. We asked ourselves, what would it take to create a workplace where women had the same leadership opportunities as men and everyone could be their best?

We interviewed our stakeholders and industry leaders, both women and men. We conducted focus groups and surveys. We engaged more than 1,500 people in all. NEW members told us they wanted better career strategies, greater opportunity, authenticity in the workplace and work/life flexibility. Women told us they needed to develop better leadership skills, reconcile their careers and lives, and be accepted as they are at work. Senior leaders told us they were under enormous competitive pressures, that they needed to prove ROI, do more with less, and find and keep talent.

These overlapping needs are the foundation of our movement to transform the workplace, win the war for talent and create a better workplace for women, men and the Millennial generation. The name of the movement is simple, direct and accurate: “It’s Time.” It’s time to adapt to the changing nation and our changing workforce, one that is half female and one-third non-white.

What you can do
Changing an industry is not an easy “ask.” But emerging leaders, mid-level leaders and senior executives can all play a part in creating a workplace with “no limits” for every man and woman.

Companies that want to increase the number of women in senior roles — and reap the rewards of women’s leadership — must make gender diversity a company priority and drive home the business case for women’s leadership.

Changing corporate culture means thoroughly challenging existing norms and stereotypes.

Organizations will need to:

1. Redefine leadership. Transformational leaders engage, collaborate and value employee contributions. Organizations must incorporate these “feminine” leadership characteristics into a new leadership model.

2. Engage men. Too many existing diversity and inclusion efforts treat white men as problems that need to be “fixed” instead of partners who need to be engaged.

3. Engage senior leaders. Companies making progress on women’s leadership share one trait: Committed executives driving change.

4. Nurture female talent. Fair hiring practices and work-life policies are not enough. Organizations must implement robust, corporate-wide programs that move the needle on women’s leadership.

5. Achieve critical mass. Advancing women’s leadership requires a critical mass of women in top roles — a minimum of 30 percent, according to a report published by The White House Project, a nonprofit committed to getting more women in the talent pipeline.

6. Enforce accountability. Organizations must have targets in place that are frequently audited and revised with the goal of increasing women in senior leadership positions.

Changes such as these will not come about on their own. Women must champion women’s leadership and enroll those who have the authority to help their cause. They should take risks and advocate the work-life changes that will help create a better workplace for everyone.

While women are not expected to bring about this change alone, they are far from powerless. Women can speak up and speak out; they can mentor other women and act as role models; they can demand challenging assignments, equal pay and promotions, and they can seek employment elsewhere if they do not get them.

Bringing about change requires a joining together of forces, not just of women, but of all who support women’s leadership. To get started on this transformative journey, visit the NEW It’s Time website and sign the wall of leaders supporting a workplace with no limits at www.newonline.org/itstime.
“Delhaize believes in a workplace where everyone can achieve their best.”

Linda Johnson
Corporate Director of Human Resources
Delhaize Group
NEW leader and member since 2009

Women leaders are the key to your success

They drive collaboration, spur innovation and connect you to consumers. NEW is the authority on women’s leadership. Our learning and leadership community inspires thousands of women — and men — each year. Now NEW has a bold new vision — a workplace with no limits — and robust new learning programs to advance your women leaders, build your business and create a better workplace for all. Find out more.

Join the Movement now at newonline.org/itstime.
The Kroger Co. is proud of our women leaders, working tirelessly every day to fulfill our Customer Promise. The individual talents and collective dedication of this remarkable group of professionals are setting new standards for excellence in the food retail industry.